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Euphemistic Framing of Political Oppression in Chuma Nwokolo's *The Extinction of Menai*

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Abstract

This study investigates the linguistic mechanics of euphemistic framing as a deliberate strategy to mask political oppression and sustain structural hegemony in Chuma Nwokolo's novel, *The Extinction of Menai*. While existing literatures explored euphemism through the benign lenses of linguistic politeness, facing-saving diplomacy, or general communicative evasion, a critical research gap persists regarding how euphemistic discourse is systematically operationalised as a primary instrument of authoritarian domination and elite manipulation, This article addresses this oversight by critically analysing purposively sampled extracts from the novel that evaluates state, military, and institutional power dynamics. Methodologically, the paper evaluates six textual extracts contextualise their broader socio-political resonance within the corporate-state complexities of the Nigerian polity. The theoretical framework integrates Micheal Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) - utilising the grammatical rank scale at the word, phrase, and clause complex levels to scrutinise transitivity processes and participant agency- with Marxist Literary Criticism to deconstruct class asymmetry

and the subversion of state apparatuses. The analysis reveals that the text's ruling elite systematically sanitise severe political oppression, resource exploitation, and dictatorial control by refracting them through a polished, and seemingly innocuous register of commerce, capitalism and globalised business networking. Fundamentally, this study demonstrates that modern political hegemony secures manufactured consent not merely though overt force, but by deploying specialised economic euphemisms that insulate the oppressors from moral accountability, obscure the human costs of structural violence and preserve elite dominance.
Keywords: Euphemism, Consent, Hegemony, Discourse, SFL, Marxism

Introduction

Language, among its many uses, can be used to convey different aspects of reality (Putnam 1). One component of language that has this potential is euphemism. Euphemism, as an instance of language use, could be employed to obscure reality, social reality (Searle 2-5; Elder-Vass 3-10; Kamusella 79). Therefore, far from being a mere tool for polite conversation, euphemism operates as a powerful vehicle for social manipulation, truth concealment, and public engagement (Karimova and Majidova 222). It can obfuscate or aggrandise, unify or regale (Burride, cited in Ali and Wafaa 2512).

Because of this complex socio-political utility, modern scholarship must look beyond euphemism as a basic rhetorical strategy in public speaking (Aytan et al. 741; Benammar, cited in Chijioke and Nwabueze 249; Cao 1094). It is instead, a universal linguistic mechanism used to navigate taboo, sensitive, or offensive terrain in alignment with cultural expectations-reflecting deep-seated moral, social, and relational codes (Magul et al.14). Thus, exploring euphemistic language in Chuma Nwokolo's *The Extinction of Menai* provides critical insight into how these linguistic maneuveres manifest within hegemonic discourse. Where

hegemony operates through manufactured consent, institutional support, and the systemic acceptance of specific ideas (Ateed and Özel Özcan 720), euphemism becomes a primary linguistic tool for securing that very consent.

Literature Review

A substantial body of literature has explored the linguistic nuances of euphemistic expressions. Nevertheless, the studies carried out on Nwokolo's *The Extinction of Menai* (as the primary text in this study) are not only few but also have not accounted for the use of euphemism. Notably, Nkeokelonye et. al. investigated how individuals express dissent through extreme protest-ranging from linguistic actions to self-inflected harm-in Chuma Nwokolo's *The Extinction of Menai*-and uses Emile Durkheim's sociological theory to position suicide as a sacrificial mechanism of gendered resistance (*Self-Immolation in The Extinction of Menai by Chuma Nwokolo* 78-90). Again, the emphasis on language loss is buttressed in Nkeokelonye's interview essay with Nwokolo, "Literature owes Africa a lot more than it has delivered", which noted that the novel's release which coincided with the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages, and highlighted Africa's existential challenges linguistically, culturally and otherwise (*Re-Thinking Cultural Extinction: Representation, Identification and Preservation* 475-486).

There are, however, many other works that have interrogated the issues of euphemism. For instance, Gittan explored the various types of euphemism in *Macbeth* and *Othello* to mask and expose power dynamics (5350-5353). Also, Lingga and Rangkuti compared the use of euphemism across different literary genre basically fiction and non-fiction (15-23). Similarly, Kulibayevich interrogated the semantic and cultural characteristics of euphemisms in English and Uzbek literature (106) where English texts were found to contain political correctness and satire while Uzbek works maintained moral alignment and linguistic

politeness. In like manner, Refita et al. examined the forms and functions of euphemisms and dysphemisms in the classic Malay-Aceh text *Hikayat Malem* Diwa (33-38).

Identifying euphemistic discourse also occurs in non-literary texts too. Aytan et al. investigated the use of euphemism and dysphemisms which are rhetorical devices deployed in political speeches. Precisely, in their study, they demonstrated how newspapers use polite or hash expressions to either cloak or criticise political realities (741-754). In like manner, Crespo-Fernández x-rayed the correlation between the use of euphemism in political discourse in British press reporting (5-26). The paper focused on the type of euphemism found in political news precisely in Republika mass media. In like manner, Kondratenko, while focusing on mass media such as USA Today, The Washington Post, The New York Times, CNN International (45-51) unveiled the use of euphemisms in political discourse.

In addition, Mudau explored the different political euphemisms in Tshivenḓa that politicians deployed in daily social interactions in Vhembe District Municipality, in Limpopo province (341-350). Similarly, Oyundash and Nyamsuren also investigated the features of political euphemisms in President Donald Trump's speeches (912-923). On the whole, Jabborova affirms that the presence of euphemism in political speeches is to downplay, to soften, obscure, or frame contentious policies and events (157). From the ongoing, therefore, Karimova and Majidova's affirmation that certain euphemisms should be labelled "political euphemism appears to be correct (14-20).

Other investigations like that of Mudib focused on the use of euphemisms in social media posts. Samples of tweets on COVID-19 containing euphemism were the major research instruments in this work while Akhmetzhanova delved into the use of euphemism in the educational context. Even in the medical world, Chijioke

and Nwabueze, while citing Hidoussi, opine that "euphemisms are especially central to the digital discourse of mental health. Often when users are in emotional distress, they mask themselves with softened or indirect expressions that may hide and disclose psychological conditions" (249). From the literature reviewed, a major gap identified is that none of these studies have been able to sufficiently account for euphemism as an example of hegemonic discourse. This article attempts to do that using Chuma Nwokolo's *The Extinction of Menai*.

Theoretical Framework

To systematically unmask the linguistic strategies used to obscure political oppression and sustain structural hegemony in Chuma Nwokolo's *The Extinction of Menai*, the study adopts a complementary dual-theoretical framework. It integrates Micheal Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics with Marxist Literacy Criticism. While SFL provides the precise micro-linguistic tools required to dissect the grammatical structures and hidden agency within the text, Marxist Literary Criticism offers the macro-sociological lens needed to interpret how these linguistic patterns serve class interests, reproduce power asymmetries, and reinforce institutional dominance. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), pioneered by Micheal Halliday, is a functional approach to language that views it as a strategic, socio-semiotic resource for making meaning. Unlike formalist linguistics frameworks that treat grammar as an abstract set of rules isolated form context, SFL asserts that language structure is fundamentally shaped by the social functions it serves. A core principle of SFL is the concept of meta-functions. Halliday posits that whenever language is used, three meta-functions are activated simultaneously, The Ideational meta-function examines how language represents human existence, inner consciousness, and external realities. The interpersonal function examines how language establishes, maintains and negotiates social relationships, power dynamics, speaker attitudes, and identities. The textual function interrogates how language is

structurally organised to create coherent, contextually relevant discourse. For the purpose of this study, the ideational meta-function is prioritised, specifically through the analytical engine of the Transitivity System (Katawazai 23-30).

Transitivity acts as the vehicle for modelling experience. It cracks open the clause, "who is doing what and to whom, and under what circumstances", The transitivity framework operates on three primary structural components: Processes: the core verbal action or state of being (e.g. material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal and existential processes), participants: the entities executing or affected by the process (e.g. actor, goal, senser, phenomenon, carrier, token), Circumstance: the background features accompanying the process, specifying dimensions like time, place, manner, cause or accompaniment (Bustam 22-34). SFL is indispensable to this study because euphemism achieves its deceptive purpose, and sanitises power by covering transitivity choices. This paper systematically tracks how elite characters in the novel choose specific grammatical structures to conceal violence by deploying Haliday's grammatical rank scale (evaluating language at the word, phrase/group, and clause-complex levels

Marxist Literary Criticism

Marxist Literary Criticism originates directly from the socio-economic principles of Karl Marx and Frederic Engels, specifically applied to the interpretation of cultural and literary texts. Marxist Literary Criticism operates on the fundamental premise that literature is not an autonomous piece of art floating in a vacuum, but a cultural product deeply intertwined with the material, economic, and historical realities of its time (Kulkarni 11-20). Its major principes include: Base and Superstructure. Marx posits that the economic organisation of society-the Base (the forces and relations of production, capitalism, material wealth)-directly determines the Superstructure (law, politics, religion, culture, and

literature). Literature, therefore, is an ideological product that reflects, critiques, or obscures the struggles within the economic base. Ideology is the matrix of dominant ideas, beliefs, and values propagated by the ruling class to legitimise their position. When the exploited masses accept these ruling-class ideas as natural, universal, or common sense, they suffer from false consciousness which prevents them from recognising their own exploitation.

Methodology

Using purposive sampling, six extracts containing euphemistic hegemonic discourse are sampled from Chuma Nwokolo's *The Extinction of Menai*. For a sample to be used, it must contain the subtle use of the language of misdirection that euphemism is known for, and it must fit into hegemonic discourse especially within the broader Nigerian polity. Each extract is numbered, thematised and indented for easy identification. The acronymic abbreviation underneath every extract stands for *The Extinction of Menai* (TEoM) which is followed by the page number of each extract. In terms of analysis, each extract begins with an explanation of the processes identified in the discourse in line with Halliday's System Functional Linguistics. The study further adopts the Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) grammatical rank scale specifically at the word level, phrase (or group level) and clause complex level (the combination of two or more clause) as the units of analysis. The last two levels are jointly referred to as "expressions" within the context of this study. Words are specifically highlighted to discuss different transitive processes and identify agency (participants) while expressions, are used to discuss Marxism.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Below is an analysis of the extracts collected, thematised and analysed.

Extract 1 (Oppression Euphemised as an Art)

> Sometimes we also identify as people with leadership potential in a country and build with them, sometimes over

> a decade. And I don't like to boast, but considering the state of our collection right now, I must say that we have developed a knack for backing the right horses (TEoM p.54).

Transitivity and Marxism

From Extract 1 above, the obvious material processes are ***"identify", "build"*** and ***"backing"***. Most importantly, the power dynamics is seen in the expression ***"we have developed a knack for backing the right horses".*** Hence, the speaker speaks from a place of control, and represents people who have the ideology to determine the outcome of something. The use of "horses" illustrates the use of euphemism. Also, ***"have developed"*** is used in this context to buttress their agency and control over events over time. Because of this ideology of control, they are careful about who they back in order to remain in control and ultimately in power. The *Circumstance of Time* is seen in the word ***"sometimes"*** (occurred twice) and ***"right now"***, *Circumstance of Frequency* is expressed in ***"sometimes over a decade",*** and *Circumstance of Purpose/Matter* in the construct ***"for backing the right horse***".

The use of modality is seen in the use of "I don't like to boast" which suggests some kind of hesitation. Nevertheless, this is immediately followed with the phrase "I must say" which captures a sense of necessity and obligation, and reveals the speaker's conviction of their capabilities. It is also an expression of confidence and assertiveness. The use of "backing the right horses" is a potent lexical choice, implying a sense of precision and tact in the execution of their mission of domination. On a careful examination, the calculatedness and an almost certainty of the speaker in the prediction of event shows a mental model of power dynamics. In a way, the speaker is an active agent of control and power. The participant is "we". *The Deontic Modality of Certainty* is seen in the expression ***"I must say"*** and the *Modality of Frequency* is seen in the use of the word "sometimes". The use of *Temporal Circumstance* is seen in the use of ***"over a decade",***

Manner as in *"people with leadership potential"* and *Place/Location* in the phrase ***"in a country"***.

There are two Marxist themes that can be deduced from this extract: the reproduction of the ruling class, and ideological hegemony and selection of the vanguard. The former conveys a sense of repackaging or rebranding of the ruling class but still with the same objective. The reference to the word "decade" indicates that they are thorough and purposeful in planning, and they are also patient and resilient as they plan their take-over bid of the industry (the state).

Extract 2 (Oppression Euphemised as a Business)

> We're businessmen; we never do anything illegal. What we do is done at primitive levels all over the world. In Washington, lobbyists make careers of trying to influence lawmakers (TEoM p.54)

Transitivity and Marxism

The two dominant processes in extract 2 are relational and material. The relational process ***"are"*** is used in this context to perform an identifying function. It creates an equation where "we" equals "businessmen". This hegemonic move ensures that every action following this sentence is interpreted as a business not a crime. The material process (do/done) in the construction ***"do"*** (never do) and ***"done"*** (is done) focus on the action. Another is the word ***"make"*** in relation to lobbyists. The word "makes" interprets the act of influencing behaviour as a productive and a career building activity. The participants are "we" and "lobbyists". The speaker appears to claim that this normative behaviour is not only common in Nigeria but also popular world over. The *Circumstance of Place* is seen in the expression, "***all over the world"*** and ***"in Washington"***. Also, note that *"all over the world"* could also suffice as *Circumstance of Degree/Extent*.

The *Modality of Certainty and Absoluteness* is reflected in the expression ***"we never do anything illegal"***. Again, the *Modality of*

Inevitability is captured in the expression "happens at primitive levels all over the world". It is also proof of naturalness where the desire for power is innate and a global practice. The phrases "we're business men" and "primitive levels" are typical examples of euphemistic lexical choices deliberately used to downplay the complexity and potential controversy that their statement may generate. It is a kind of counter discourse to legitimise their action of control. This is further seen in the mention of the lobbyists in Washington, implying a sense of legitimacy and normalisation. Also, consider the use of *Epistemic Modality* in the expression, ***"In Washington, lobbyists make careers of trying to influence lawmakers".***

The expression, "we never do anything illegal" is a classic expression of the Marxist expression of law and legality. To them, law is not a moral standard but a function of class power. Consequently, it is the ruling class that determines what is legal in a way that protects and enables their own economic interests. The law simply codifies their material interest. By re-affirming that "what we do is done at all primitive levels all over the world", they are referencing the concept of primitive accumulation often through force, exploitation, seizure or expropriation of collective wealth. It is of like saying that the Marxist order has not changed and its movement as potent as ever.

Extract 3 (Oppression Masked as Business)

> Capitalism is inconsistent with patriotism; otherwise, there'd be no such thing as a tax haven. Business transcends borders. If countries can own people, why not the other way round? The most patriotic thing you can do for your country is to be very rich! Taxes win wars! (TEoM 55)

Transitivity and Marxism

Extract 3 contains relational processes like ***"is"*** in the expressions, "capitalism is inconsistent…" and "the most patriotic thing…is to

be rich". The relational process ***"is"*** functions as a lexical bridge. It does not just describe patriotism, it redefines it. It is also used to in relation to making wealth seeking a moral obligation that supersedes being patriotic. Also, the use of existential process is seen in the use of the word ***"there"*** in the expression "there'd be no such thing as a tax haven". It suggests that the very existence of tax havens proves that capitalism has already ***"won"*** over patriotism. Also, the use of material process is seen in the use of the word ***"own"*** in the construction, "if countries can own people". The material process ***"own"*** treats people as commodities. **"Win"** is another example of the use of material process in the expression, "Taxes win wars". The word "win" frames taxes not as a social contribution but as weapon itself. Business is personified as the "actor" that represent the capitalists and their interest. The *Circumstance of Location* is seen in the use of the word ***"border",*** and the *Circumstance of Quality* seen in ***"very rich".***

The expression in the extract 3 that says "the most patriotic thing to do for your country is to very rich" is consistent with capitalism, and employs a modal expression that has to do with certainty and conviction. The use of the phrase "tax haven" is a critical lexical choice that highlights the tension between national interest and global interest or capitalist interest. The use of the term "very rich" though provocative is suggestive that ownership of resources often translates into ownership and control of power. This is the capitalist agency of control and power. From the Marxist point of view, the statement "capitalism transcends borders" typically affirms that capitalism is inherently a global phenomenon. Thus, the emphasis on profit and capital accumulation is a core principle of the Marxist ideology. This explains why capitalists are constantly seeking newer markets, cheaper labour and minimal taxation (potentially desiring tax havens).

Extract 4 (Oppression Masked as an Art):

> If I told you I owned a couple of paintings in Nigeria it would have been just statistics, but if I showed you one

> such as this, you'd feel it through your pores, won't you? It would no longer be a matter of a number on an inventory. It becomes a matter of superlatives, of scale…My friends, I am a collector. You collect paintings? … 'These are toys-houses, boats, aircraft-these are hobbies. We-the club I lead-collect countries; that's my real profession (TEoM 53).

Transitivity and Marxism

The relational processes are depicted by words like ***"am", "are"*** and ***"is"***. The word "am" and "is" are the primary lexical triggers. They fix the narrator's identity not as a criminal or a conqueror but simply as one who collects things. He uses these relational processes to make the systemic exploitation sound like a legitimate pursuit. The mental process is depicted by the word ***"feel"*** as in the construction, "you would feel it through your pores". Hegemony is foregrounded here by moving the argument away from logic (statistics) and into "pores"-the instinctive, physical realisation of power. The material processes are ***"collect"*** and ***"showed"*** as in the expressions, "we collect countries", "if I showed you". The word "collect" is the central mental process, and the narrator uses this to refer to countries as inanimate objects. The relational process becoming ***"becomes"*** signals a transformation in perception where power is no longer a number but a scale. Within extract 13, the participants are "I" and "we". Entire countries are also cast in the participants role of a goal while objects like houses, boats and aircraft are used as participants objects of comparison. The *Circumstance of Manner* is seen ***"through your pores",*** *Circumstance of Location/Domain* is seen ***"In Nigeria"*** and *Circumstance of Quality* in the construct, ***"superlatives of scales".***

The expression "If I told you I owned a couple of paintings in Nigeria" in extract 4 reveals a power dynamic where the speaker positions himself as the agent who collects valuable "items". Thus, "I am a collector" shows the speaker's agency and identity as a "collector". The term collector is a superficial reference to himself

as agent of control and power. No wonder, the expression "I collect countries". *Modality of Certainty and Shared Experience* is seen in the expressions ***"you'd feel it through your pores, won't you?"*** and "***It would no longer be a matter of a number on an inventory. It becomes a matter of superlatives, of scale".*** The speaker's comparison of collecting countries to collecting paintings is a powerful lexical choice and a euphemistic approach, shading readers from the underlying ideology and power that birth the process of this "collection". However, the use of words like toys comprising houses, boats are aircrafts is a diminutive lexical choice that downplays the significance of these items to collecting countries. Extract 4 unveils the Marxist mentality of power and ownership, where collecting "countries" is the ultimate display of power and control unlike just acquiring things like houses and the likes which the speaker describes as "toys".

Extract 5 (Oppression Masked as Transnational Business):

> There are no guarantees in this business, Your Excellency. But Washington doesn't want war in this delta. Every shell that falls in Ubesia will add ten cents to the price of gas in New York (TEoM 61).

Transitivity and Marxism

The processes in Extract 5 create a direct, mechanical link between local destruction and global price shifts. The relational/existential process is conveyed by the words **"there"** and ***"are"*** respectively in "there are no guarantees". This establishes the baseline between reality of the "business". There is an implied mental process of sensing in the construct ***"want"*** (Washington doesn't want war). Hegemony is foregrounded by assigning a "mind" to a city (Washington). Therefore, it is at the highest seat of power that war is decided. The material process is shown in the use of words like ***"falls"*** and ***"add"*** (will add) in the construction "every shell that falls" and "will add ten cents". The narrator uses these material processes to create a sequence of "cause" and "effect". The violence in Ubesia (the shell falling) is only relevant because of the material change it causes in New York. The super-actors are

Washington and New York while Ubesia is merely a variable in the equation. The *Circumstance of Location* is a dominant process in Extract 5 as ***"In Delta", "In Ubesia"***, ***"In New York"*** and ***"in this business"***. Also, the *Circumstance of Extent/Amount* is seen in the use of ***"ten cents".***

The articulation, in extract 5, "there are no guarantees in this business" reveals power dynamics where the speaker is positioned as one with an understanding of what the odds are in a high-stake environment. The phrase every "shell that falls in Ubesia will add ten cents to price of gas in New York" shows the relatedness between economic and political interests, indicating that the ideology woven around economic interest can either undermine or enhance warring conditions.

The *Modality of Uncertainty and Risk* is conveyed by the expression ***"there are no guarantee in this business"***. Also, "Washington doesn't want war" implies a sense of conviction and certainty about the intentions of another power actor. Also, the use of the phrase "this business" is a euphemistic lexical choice, downplaying the nature of the activity on ground. This extract 5 refers to the capitalist depiction of global politics and economics where global actors like Washington are seen to prioritise economic interest over military actions.

Extract 6 (Oppression Masked in Financial and Real Estate Fields):

> Imagine a hundred power brokers from all over the world with a hundred unique contacts each, *all in one club*. That gives every single power broker access to a hundred thousand quality contacts worldwide. That's my idea of a coup. Only it'd no longer an idea. You can call up a president on the phone. Imagine that with me as a telephone exchange you have that kind of access to one hundred presidents. That's my coup, friends. Totally legit (TEoM 55).

Transitivity and Marxism

From Extract 6, the narrator uses mental process to initiate a state of being, one that makes radical power grab sound like s professional enterprise. The use of the word ***"imagine"*** is the primary trigger of this mental state of domination used to create a hegemonic reality. It moves the coup from being described as a crime to a shared vision. The relational process is shown in the use of words like ***"is"***, ***"are"*** and ***"be"***. The lexical triggers "is" and "be" perform the hegemonic "naming". The material process initiated by words like ***"gives"*** and ***"call"*** (up) presents the accumulation of power as a generous act of distribution within the elitist club. The material process of "calling up" a president reduces a head of state/president to a mere participant in a phone directory. The participants/actors are the power brokers. The *Circumstance of Location* is seen ***"all over the world"*** and The *Circumstance of Accompaniment* ***"in one club"*** which highlights the exclusivity of the hegemonic order.

The speaker's agency of power and control is seen in the phrase, "You can call up a president on the phone". *The Modality of Possibility* is seen in the expression ***"imagine that with me as a telephone exchange".*** The use of the lexical phrase "power brokers" is indicative of powerful individuals and the speaker appears to be one of them. The use of "totally legit" somehow downplays the controversy of the process involved in the exercise of power.

Extract 6 shows the ruling class's power and influence over countries and not just people. Hence, this extract is connected to power, influence and networking. The reader infers that power and ideology are products of networking, connecting to like-minded people guarantees one access to agency and control. The phrase "my coup" is a nominalisation of the process of leveraging and building on a network of powerful individuals. The speaker is nominated to be a highly powerful person who is equally

connected to a network of powerful individuals. This is considered as a valuable resource that gives one access to power and control, internationally. They have the attributes of self-interest and ambition.

Highlights of Words Used for the Euphemistic Framing of Oppression in Military Authoritarian and Political Context

1. "**Backing the right horses".** This is a metaphor used by Nwokolo to show the strategic investment and influence in political leadership, highlighting the speaker's role in shaping outcomes.
2. "**Primitive levels all over the world" and "lobbyists make careers"**. The word "primitive" downplays the significance of influence-peddling, while "lobbyists" kind of normalises the practice, implying it's a standard part of politics.
3. **"Capitalism is inconsistent with patriotism"** and "**The most patriotic thing... is to be very rich!".** The juxtaposition of "capitalism" and "patriotism" in the excerpt by Nwokolo challenges traditional notions of national loyalty, emphasizing wealth accumulation as a form of patriotism.
4. **"Collect countries"** and **"My real profession"** are also indicative of the use of metaphor. Hence, the metaphor of "collecting countries" implies a sense of ownership and control over nations, highlighting the speaker's perceived influence and power.
5. (Same as 2):
6. **"Every shell that falls... will add ten cents to the price of gas"**: This statement highlights the global economic implications of local conflicts.

Discussion of Findings

In the present study, there is a deliberate masking of oppressive regimes in power relations in *The Extinction of Mena*i primarily to make light or soften the negative antecedents of oppression. This linguistic strategy masks the realities of oppressive military,

authoritarian and political context, making them appear rather subtle, and shielding victims from these negative realities by reducing the moral weight of oppressive actions, and making them less antagonistic and perhaps even justifiable, but the primary aim is to create misdirection and deception.

There are several cases in the texts where euphemistic discourse in military and authoritarian power sphere is deployed to mask the harsh realities of oppressive regimes such as "I am a collector…we-the club I lead-collect countries; that's my real profession" (Extract 4), "…in this business" and "Imagine a hundred power brokers from all over the world with a hundred unique contacts each, all in one club. That gives every single power broker access to a hundred thousand quality contacts worldwide" (Extract 6).

These examples above show the use of evasion and ambiguity. To refresh your memory, the use of the expression "I am collector", in the context of this narrative is ambiguous. On the one hand, the word "collector" could be interpreted on its face value, meaning someone who collects things or someone who is interested in artistic collection. Then the reference to "business" is another word with multiple meaning. Again, the use of "broker" is another case of misdirection. Nwokolo demonstrates that this is a deliberate ploy to downplay and legitimise control, and to disguise repression using capitalist orientation in *The Extinction of Menai*. On a careful inspection also, the use of words like "business" and "capitalism" suggest a register focused on economic activity, trade, and the system of private ownership. "Businessmen" and "brokers" are specific roles within this system, while "collectors" could refer to those accumulating assets or engaging in trade.

Furthermore, the use of spinning and framing to present words and expressions acceptedly is another trade mark of euphemistic discourse: "we never do anything illegal. What we do is done at

primitive levels all over the world" (Extract 2), "If countries can own people, why not the other way round?" (Extract 3), and "imagine a hundred power brokers from all over the world with a hundred unique contacts each, all in one club" (Extract 6). These expressions, chosen rather carefully, have the tendency to shape public perception and influence interpretations. In particular, they have been used to dismiss any kind of illegality related to their action, and presented the ownership of things (countries inclusive) as generic rather than monolithic term, and further presents power brokers as just common or ordinary members of a typical "club". The ongoing discussion shows how language has been deliberately used to misdirect and mislead with the aim of achieving a given agenda.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that euphemism in Chuma Nwokolo's *The Extinction of Menai* operates not as a benign linguistic tool of social politeness, but as a deliberate ideological mechanism designed to mask political oppression and maintain hegemony. Through a combination of Micheal Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics-specifically through transitivity choices at grammatical rank scale-with macro-sociological lens of Marxist Literary Criticism, the paper successfully exposes how the text's ruling elite systematically sanitise severe state violence, dictatorial overreach, and capital accumulation. The analysis reveals that harsh realities like military control, territorial expropriation, and systemic dominance are strategically refracted through innocuous global register of business transaction, capital networks, and corporate enterprise. Essentially, this linguistic subversion insulates oppressors from moral accountability and constructs a false consciousness that distances the execution of power from its severe human costs, and confirms that modern political hegemony secures manufactured consent by embedding structural violence into the everyday semantics of transnational commerce.

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